

PATENT

Attorney Docket No: BRI/019

REMARKS

The August 11, 2005 Office Action allowed independent claim 21, and rejected the remaining pending elected claims as anticipated by the abstract of Patent Document ZA 9401443 to Ellis et al. ("Ellis"). Specifically, the Office Action states that:

The abstract of the Ellis patent clearly teaches all the limitations of claim 1. Step a) is inherently carried out in view of the reference to "the detonators to which addresses have already been assigned" (lines 5-6 of abstract).

...
Claim 22 is anticipated by Ellis as well as per the discussion above regarding claim 1.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that if anything, only part of step a) of independent claims 1 and 22 is inherently taught by Ellis. Step a) of each of those claims reads as follows:

a) providing [each/at least one] slave device ...
with an identification[,] **and pre-loading one or
more slave device identifications into the
master device**

Even if it is assumed for the sake of argument that the first part of step a) of providing a slave device with an identification [in the order of steps required by the claims] is inherently carried out by Ellis, the second part (**in bold**) is clearly not taught or suggested by Ellis or its abstract. In fact, a review of the complete Ellis patent (copy accompanying this response) shows that Ellis teaches that no identifications provided to slave devices are pre-loaded into the master device. Instead, all

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detonators in Ellis have no identifications until they are connected to the blasting machine and assigned identifications that are generated sequentially:

As each detonator is connected to the trunk line the apparatus 10 detects the connection [and a] unique address is generated and ... transmitted by the apparatus on the trunk line 60 to the respective detonator. ...

It follows that using the techniques of the invention each detonator is given an address number which uniquely identifies the detonator and which corresponds to the chronological order in which the detonators are connected to the trunk line.

Ellis, page 12, line 2 to page 13, line 24. It is clear therefore not only that the second part of step a) is not disclosed or suggested by Ellis, but to perform such would defeat the very purpose of the invention of Ellis. Consequently, there could be no motivation to combine Ellis with any other prior art to arrive at such a limitation.

Additionally, step b) (i.e., "after step a), connecting at least one slave device to the system") is not met by Ellis, because it is carried out after step a) (i.e., providing identifications to slaves and pre-loading them in the master). In contrast, in Ellis, identifications are not even generated until after connection of the slave device(s).

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Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that the presently amended application be allowed. The Examiner is kindly invited to telephone the undersigned to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 20, 2005

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Attached: Copy of 2A 9401443 to Ellis et al.

REF: P.16781

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
PATENTS ACT, 1979AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT
(Section 30(1) -- Regulation 22)

The grant of a patent is hereby requested by the undermentioned applicant on the basis of the present application filed in duplicate.

OFFICIAL APPLICATION NO.

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